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Identical letters dated 8 July 2009 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter that represents the position of the Syrian Arab Republic on the tenth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) (see annex).

I would highly appreciate if the present letter and its annex were circulated as a document of the Security Council before the date of discussion of the above-mentioned report by the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the identical letters dated 8 July 2009 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

[Original: Arabic]

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith two letters addressed to the United Nations Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council concerning the position of the Syrian Arab Republic on the tenth biannual report of the Secretary-General on implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2009/330).

1. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has consistently expressed its complete respect for Lebanese sovereignty and has unfailingly provided all kinds of support and assistance to the Lebanese Government in securing its authority and sovereignty over all parts of its territory. Syria has also provided all types of support for building the capacities of and training the Lebanese Army, with a view to reinforcing its national role and enabling it to defend its territory and resist the various Israeli onslaughts, acts of aggression and invasions to which Lebanon is subjected.

2. On 11 August 2006, following the iniquitous Israeli onslaught on Lebanese territory in July 2006, the Security Council adopted resolution 1701 (2006) with the aim of halting the Israeli attacks on Lebanon which targeted various parts of the country and its infrastructure, thereby devastating security and stability in Lebanon and the safety of its citizens. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic is therefore astonished that the Secretary-General and his special representative should drag the name of Syria into the current report on implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), because that country is not involved in the resolution: those concerned with its implementation are Israel and Lebanon.

3. Relations between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic have recently perceptibly improved. The Damascus summit held by President Bashar Al-Assad, President of the Syrian Arab Republic, and President Michel Sleiman, President of Lebanon, on 13 and 14 August 2008, gave positive impetus to those relations. During the summit, it was agreed that there should be diplomatic relations between the two countries and embassies opened; that borders should be delineated and precisely defined; and that the issue of missing Lebanese and Syrian nationals should be addressed. The recent progress made in relations between Syria and Lebanon is the outcome of a recognition by both countries of the inevitability of those relations if their interests are to be served. Other parties should not interfere in the developing progress of that relationship in case the achievements that have been realized in that regard are put in jeopardy. The Syrian Arab Republic is continuing to firmly establish the relationship and to support and maintain the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon, including support for Lebanese National Dialogue.

4. Once again, the Syrian Arab Republic is surprised that the report of the Secretary-General should consider issues that are purely bilateral in nature and with regard to which only the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon may take any decisions.

5. The question of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two friendly countries of the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon and their exchange of ambassadors is a bilateral issue that concerns the sovereignty of each of those two countries. It has nothing to do with implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). The leadership of both countries have taken the requisite measures in that regard.

6. Pursuant to the agreement reached by the two Presidents, Syria, for its part, and to the best of its ability, has taken a number of measures designed to guarantee the security of the Syro-Lebanese borders and prevent smuggling. In coordination with the relevant Lebanese authorities, Syria has deployed its forces along the northern border with Lebanon, with a view to securing that border and maintaining the security of both Syria and Lebanon.

7. With regard to the delineation and determination of the Syro-Lebanese borders, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reiterates its affirmation that the issue concerns the authorities in Syria and Lebanon. In numerous letters addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, Syria has expressed its willingness to delineate and determine the Syro-Lebanese borders, starting from the north and finishing in the south. The process of determining the border in the Shab'a Farms is difficult because of the Israeli occupation of those territories. That section cannot be mapped until Israeli has withdrawn. The United Nations and the international community should bring pressure to bear on Israel, which is violating the provisions of resolution 1701 (2006).

8. It is further cause for surprise that the Secretary-General should repeatedly raise the issue of the delineation and determination of the Syro-Lebanese borders, apparently oblivious of a more serious issue, namely, the fact that the security and stability of Lebanon are threatened on a continual and daily basis by the continued occupation by Israel of the Shab'a Farms. The Secretary-General merely expresses concern over that continuing occupation, rather than calling for Israel's immediate withdrawal, without delay, from Lebanese territory, pursuant to the provisions of resolution 1701 (2006) and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

9. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic affirms that the Palestinian presence in Lebanon, both within and beyond the Palestinian camps, is a purely Lebanese-Palestinian issue that is governed by the Cairo Agreement that was signed by both sides in 1969. Syria has nothing to do with matters of that type.

10. The fact that the report raises the issue of continued arms smuggling into Lebanon contradicts paragraph 49 of the report itself, which states that the Government of Lebanon and its agencies have not reported to the United Nations any incidents of arms smuggling into Lebanon. It also contradicts what was stated in the second report of the Border Assessment Team, which affirmed that there were no instances of the smuggling of arms or combatants across the borders. It further conflicts with statements made by senior Lebanese officials, who have denied the existence of any such activities. We do not believe that it is acceptable for the Secretariat to continue to rely on Israeli reports that are proven to have no credibility and are prompted by political considerations.

11. The fact that the report relies on Israeli allegations in respect of many issues is unacceptable for a number of reasons, including the fact that those allegations are made by an enemy State, lack any proof or hard facts and provide Israel with

unacceptable justification for continuing its aggression against fraternal Lebanon, going to extremes in its violations of Lebanese territory and airspace and shirking implementation of the provisions of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006).

12. The fact that the United Nations ignores the facts has encouraged Israel to continue to perpetrate violations and attacks against Lebanon in a manner that seriously threatens that country's sovereignty, security and stability, as recent events in Lebanon have demonstrated: the pertinent Lebanese authorities have uncovered and broken up many Israeli spy networks that were operating in Lebanon. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic is astonished by the position of the United Nations Secretary-General with regard to those spy networks, which he describes as "alleged", albeit 14 arrested Lebanese nationals have been brought before the court on charges of collaborating with Israel in blatant violation of resolution 1701 (2006).

13. Finally, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic welcomes the call of the United Nations Secretary-General for all possible efforts to be exerted to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, on the basis of the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338(1973), and affirms the need for the United Nations to play its part in achieving that aim.